

International Relations Field Exam
January 2013

Please answer one question from each section. Keep in mind that you will be evaluated not only on your knowledge of the relevant literature, but also on your ability to think independently and make a compelling argument.

Section 1

1. Regime type has become a central variable for explaining processes and outcomes in international relations. This research program does, however, have its share of detractors. Drawing on two issue areas---one from security studies, one from IPE--- identify the strengths and weaknesses of regime type as an explanatory variable. Please provide a brief discussion of how existing research could be extended or refined in these chosen issue areas.

2. In your view, what is the most compelling explanation for the apparent absence of large-scale interstate war since 1945?

Section 2

1. What puzzle should be addressed by any rationalist explanation for war, according to Fearon (1995)? Explain your answer in words and graphically. Describe the three rationalist explanations for war proposed by Fearon (1995). Assess their relative importance, using Powell (2006).

2. Domestic Politics and International Conflict Discuss the following: 'The democratic peace holds because democratic leaders are more accountable than non-democratic leaders.' In your answer, define the terms 'democratic peace' and 'accountability' and refer to four of the following references: Fearon (1994), Schultz (1998), Russett and Oneal (2001), Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003), Weeks (2008), Debs and Goemans (2010).

Section 3

1. To what extent has rational choice helped us understand conflicts and their resolution? What do you think the future role of rational choice will be in the study of international relations?

2. Some scholars contend that international law is epiphenomenal to power and that treaties do not constrain state behavior. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Be sure to refer to empirical examples in your answer.

End of Exam